

REMARKS

1. In response to the Office Action mailed June 17, 2005, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. Claims 1-18, 20, 25, 26 and 29-40 were last presented for examination. Claims 1-15, 20, 25, 26, 29, 30 and 34-40 were allowed, claims 16 and 31 were rejected and claims 17, 18, 32 and 33 were objected to in the outstanding Office Action. By the foregoing Amendments, claims 16 and 31 have been amended and claims 17, 18, 32 and 33 have been cancelled. No claims have been added. Thus, upon entry of this paper, claims 1-16, 20, 25, 26, 29-31 and 34-40 will be pending in this application. Of these thirty-three (29) claims, nine (9) claims (claims 1, 10, 16, 20, 26, 31, 34, 37 and 39) are independent.

2. Based on the above Amendments and following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the outstanding objections and rejections be reconsidered, and that they be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 1-15, 20, 25, 26, 29, 30 and 34-40 recite allowable subject matter. Applicants also note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 17, 18, 32 and 33 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

4. Claim 16 has been amended to include the recitations of claim 17, and claims 17 and 18 have been canceled. As such, claim 16 includes the recitations of an objected to claim (claim 17), its base claim (claim 16) and all intervening claims (none). Accordingly, claim 16, as amended, is in condition for allowance. Similarly, claim 31 has been amended to include the recitations of claim 33, and claims 32 and 33 have been canceled. As such, claim 31 includes the recitations of an objected to claim (claim 33), its base claim (claim 31) and all intervening claims (none). Accordingly, claim 31, as amended, is in condition for allowance.

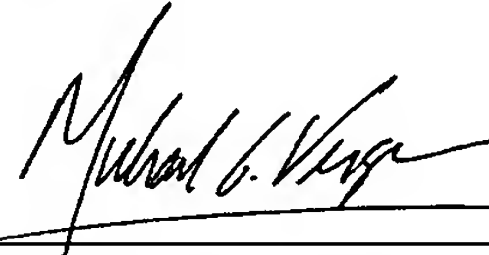
Dependent Claims

5. The dependent claims incorporate all of the subject matter of their respective independent claims and add additional subject matter which makes them a fortiori and independently patentable over the art of record. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the outstanding rejections of the dependent claims be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

6. In view of the foregoing, this application should be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael G. Verga", is written over a horizontal line.

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December 23, 2005